

## **Gibbs Lake Workshop Notes September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

### **Table 1 –**

1. Need current data 2006, 2007, 2008
2. Firing Line survey
3. Preferred sites “1<sup>st</sup> come 1<sup>st</sup> serve.”
4. More LE presence in problem areas
5. No un-attended lights in blinds (or other devices) to “reserve” blind site
6. Concern (3AM) boat safety due to new camping regulation
7. Open more area to hunting – reduce crowding
8. \*Shotshell limit
  - 3 - limit 25 shot shells
  - 3 - want no limit of shot shells
  - 1 - abstain
9. Refuge require immediate retrieval
10. Do not support owning a dog requirement
11. Hunter conflict strategies - implement only on the line, not a broader zone
12. Collect additional and current data, to see if navigational restrictions, increased closed areas and displaced hunters contribute to overcrowding.
13. Ethics for hunters in handouts at landings.

### **Table 2**

1. No changes
2. Concerned that 6 goals are not pertinent, (more “people” related).
3. Recommend proactive education – ID and enforcement
4. Don’t address “crippling and skybusting” as a whole, (individual basis).
5. Need current data relating skybusting to crippling.

## **Table 2 - Continued**

6. Limiting shells is not a good idea.
7. Stop managing people – manage wildlife
8. Make people retrieve ducks.
9. More visible wardens making people contact
10. 1<sup>st</sup> come 1<sup>st</sup> served basis.
11. Increased enforcement on hunter misconduct.
12. Changes to the boundary - none.
13. Stake traditional blinds on firing line (no consensus)
14. Feels none of this even matters anyway...”We’re screwed”.
15. If we all have such bad experiences out there, why do we come back?

## **Table 3**

1. Crowding/conflict is there a significant problem?
2. People choose to hunt firing line and view this as a quality hunt, (ie. seniors, firm ground, and easy access).
3. Most days can get a spot on firing line.
4. Most people respect the rule of 1<sup>st</sup> come gets the spot.
5. The few poor sportsmen who don’t respect the rights of whoever is in the spot first and cause conflict could be cited for disorderly conduct. This punishes the wrongdoer and not innocent hunters. Also educates – enforce existing rules and customs.
6. Don’t over-regulate to solve a problem, that doesn’t exist.
7. Pass shooting (firing line hunting) requires less space than hunting with decoys.
8. Restricting the means of navigation will push hunters into smaller areas.
9. Closing Proudfoot area will push hunters into smaller area.
10. Skybusting not a significant problem.

**Table 3 - Continued**

- A. FWS data too old, not accurate, not scientific/reliable.
- B. Modern ballistics vs 50 yards.
- 11. Skybusting is not a firing line problem.
  - A. Can occur anywhere
  - B. Solution: educate hunters
- 12. Creation of a managed hunt zone will not influence hunters estimates of how high bird is, ie. this solution does not impact FWS perception of skybusting.

**Table 4**

- 1. No problem.
- 2. If there is a problem, collect data for various groups, sizes and dates.
- 3. Firing line doesn't exactly mean skybusting, hunter's responsibility to know range etc.
- 4. Issues with moving firing line – just “moved” the problem.
- 5. Possible educational video solution: concerning rules, regs, skybusting, hunter education, individual issues etc.
- 6. Increased conflict with greater concentration.
- 7. See moving firing line south to spread out hunters.
- 8. Issues with water depth and access: less access for some.
- 9. LE issues, state vs. federal enforcement.
- 10. Maybe stake line (no draws) just to spread folks 3 / 4 people/stake?
- 11. 2006 survey for quality of hunt through out season.
  - A. 2 weeks, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> season
  - B. Opening day.
- 12. Define “quality hunt.”

**Table 4 - Continued**

13. Always other/hunt area options.
14. Code of ethics posted at landings.
15. Keep firing line where it currently is.
16. Education at landings by FWS and staff.
  - A. Education in field by LE and staff.
  - B. “self policing toolbox” – neighborhood watch like
17. No limit on shot shells.
18. More enforcement on littering.

**Table 5**

1. Hunter displacement into other areas.
2. Cut trees along the line so birds fly lower.
3. For quality hunt open Trempealeau Refuge.
4. Biggest problems (overcrowding) on weekends.
5. Firing lines are not for decoy hunting.
6. More hunter education (ethics)
7. Skybusting is not limited to firing lines.
8. Someone must be present to reserve a spot.
9. Who will enforce rules?
10. Trying to fix a problem that might not be there.
11. Enforce existing laws by FWS.
12. Remove red line.
13. Need more data.

**Table 5 - Continued**

14. Most of the group doesn't feel crowding is an issue.

**Table 6**

1. Moving line doesn't solve any problems, it just moves more people into smaller area.

2. Skybusting education through signage.

3. Education of shotgun function, distance judging.

4. Reduce competition? Group feels it is self-regulated.  
Moves problem elsewhere like shoveling dirt under rug.

5. Have goose and duck silhouettes (as references) with yardage lines at boat landings.

6. Update data on:

A. Crippling

B. Hunter Complaints

C. Skybusting %

D. Retrieving %

7. Education over regulation.

8. Multiple agency help for hunter education.

9. Add data collection at bag checks.

10. Peer pressure brought up 4 years ago and has been effective.

11. Discourage fee guided hunts in outlined area.

12. Hunter education.

**Table 7**

1. Don't think there is a problem.

2. Habitat is decreasing in quality.

**Table 7 – Continued**

3. 1 person thinks a managed hunt is a good idea within the closed area.
  - A. Increase opportunities by making managed hunt from Goose Chute to Black Deer launch .
  - B. Not open every day- for disabled, kids.
  - C. Expand the managed hunt into the closed area.
4. Access/sticker fee, do fee through state license.
5. Need current data
6. Need better habitat and education (sand coming down Black River).
7. Hunter education at landings, comprehensive education plan.
  - A. Signs about ethical hunting
  - B. Hunter education keyed to habitat.
8. Monitor hunters by third party 2006-7 (competition etc.)
9. Increase opportunities by improving habitat.
10. Reduce/limit the number of shells allowed (15-25).

**Table 8**

1. Need new data to study effects of Alternative E.
  - A. 2 yrs 2006-2007
  - B. Take into account new technology
2. Increase LE presence and FWS LE personnel.
3. Move closed area boundaries south to open water and increase areas open to hunting.
4. LEAVE ALONE NOW.
5. Moving line would increase loss of waterfowl and decrease opportunities for older and disabled hunters.

**Table 9**

1. Any changes to Gibbs will displace hunters to other areas - “move” the problem.
2. Need more enforcement/education.
3. Competition limits itself by people choosing to hunt low-density areas (can’t manage competition).
4. Reduce crowding by providing more opportunities elsewhere.
5. Don’t feel there is a higher crippling rate per hunter in this area vs. lower use areas.

**Table 10**

1. More law enforcement presence, peer pressure and ethics/education.
2. Don’t believe 50% is correct.
3. Skybusting mostly done by young/inexperienced hunters.
4. Skybusting will always be a problem, especially inexperienced hunters, no matter number of regulations.
5. Combination of Slow No Wake area in the North and pushing people out of Gibbs Lake will drastically worsen problem.
6. Leave camping “as is”(if people are willing to do it, let them).
7. Need accurate numbers on how many people hunt the 147 acres throughout the season (aerial photos, OK, surveys) to estimate effects and hunter displacement.
8. Without active enforcement, problems will not go away, just move to somewhere else (enforce laws already on books).
9. This group feels that limiting shells will not solve skybusting/crippling.